

“Why God’s Ordained Authority is so Important” Part 1 - 1 Corinthians 11:1-3 – September 20th, 2015

- Today’s teaching will be part one of a new series I’ve titled, “Why God’s Ordained Authority is so Important.”
- Before we jump into this, I have to confess that the passage before us is amongst the most difficult to teach in the entire Bible.
- Perhaps it goes without saying, but the passage before us is also amongst the most difficult to understand in the Bible as well.

- In order to both teach and understand this passage, we first need to know a little bit more about the culture there in Corinth.
- In that culture, a woman’s long hair and the covering on her head was as a sign of respect for the authority that she was under.
- This is why the prostitutes in the temple of the goddess Aphrodite would not wear any head covering and usually had short hair.

Adam Clarke of this wrote, “It was a custom, both among the Greeks and Romans, and among the Jews an express law, that no woman should be seen abroad without a veil. This was, and is, a common custom through all the east, and none but public prostitutes go without veils.”

- It’s with this understanding that we can now work our way through this difficult passage concerning the importance of authority.
- In so doing, I hope to, by way of a personal application, answer the question of, why God’s ordained authority is so important?
- This in a culture today that has no respect for authority, whether it’s in society, in the home, in the workplace and in the church.

1. Jesus exemplified submission to the Father’s authority (Verses 1-3)

1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 2 I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you. 3 But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

- v1 Paul says to follow his example as he follows the example of Christ, which may have been in the context of the prior chapter.
- v2 He goes on to praise them for remembering him in everything and for holding to the traditions just as he passed on to them.
- v3 He says they need to realize the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

- Sadly, its passages like this one that have been misinterpreted, giving way to many a man taking this to an unbiblical extreme.
- By that I mean, that men have sought to make the woman inferior to the man, which is something we’ll put to rest in vs. 8-12.
- The fact of the matter is, that men and women are equal, however, God has ordained that man has headship over the woman.

- Lest any man let this go to his head, pun intended, he would do well to consider how that Christ has the headship over the man.
- Moreover, God the Father has the headship over Christ as the son, which is an example of the perfect order of God’s authority.
- I suppose Paul’s letter to the Ephesians comes to mind when this comparison is made as it relates to the structure of headship.

Ephesians 5:21–32 21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—30 for we are members of his body. 31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

- The Apostle Paul is echoing to the Ephesian church that which he is saying to the Corinthian church concerning this headship.
- If you think about it, it has to be the way God has designed it because if there were two heads, you would have an abnormality.
- It’s for this reason that the man is the head over the woman, however, mans headship must be one that is sacrificial and loving.

Alan Redpath - “A man who can only rule by stamping his foot had better remain single. But a man who knows how to govern his house by the love of the Lord, through sacrificial submission to the Lord, is the man who is going to make a perfect husband. The woman who cannot submit to an authority like that had better remain single.”

G. Campbell Morgan recalls the story of the older Christian woman who had never married, explaining, “I never met a man who could master me.”

- I would suggest that a woman is more apt to come under the headship of a man who understands his God given responsibility.
- This because, she will feel secure and protected under his authority when he takes responsibility for the leadership he’s given.
- The problems begin when the man abdicates his leadership responsibility, which is why a woman will step in and take the lead.

- I’m sure you’ve heard it said that sometimes the best man for the job is a woman, and I would tend to agree with that statement.
- There are situations that arise when a women may need to take the lead simply because the man has refused to take the lead.
- However, I would contend that often times the reason a woman will do this is not because a man refused, but she has rejected.

One commentator put it best this way, “The failure of men to lead in the home and in the church, and to lead in the way Jesus would lead, has been a chief cause of the rejection of male authority, and is inexcusable.”